

REGULAR MEETING - BOARD OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL DISTRICT OF SOMERSET
February 16, 2009
Minutes

The Regular Meeting of the Somerset Board of Education was called to order by President Tim Witzmann at 7:01 p.m. Roll call was taken. Members present were Tim Witzmann, Brian Moulton, Catherine Cranston, Marie Colbeth, Mike Connor, Robert Gunther and Marin Hansch.

Cranston moved, with second by Colbeth, to approve the agenda. Motion carried.

Witzmann read off procedures for the Groups or Individuals Wishing to Be Heard portion of the meeting. No one came forward.

The board recognized Somerset School's 2009 Valedictorian, Amy Wells, daughter of Karen & Scott Wells. Amy was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to a basketball game, however High School Principal Shawn Madden shared with the board Amy's outstanding academic record, stating Amy has received numerous awards for academic excellence, including academic medals and letters, and has been on the A Honor Roll for the past four years. After graduation Amy is planning to attend the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire or the University of Minnesota-Duluth to pursue a degree in the areas of math and science. Witzmann handed Madden a certificate of achievement award to present to Wells.

The board recognized Somerset School's 2009 Salutatorian, Michael Meyer, son of Gerald & Patti Meyer. Madden said Michael has achieved much during his school years; he has earned several awards during the last four years, including academic excellence letters, medals, and certificates. Michael has also been a member of National Honor Society (NHS) for the last two years. After graduation, Michael intends to continue his education, with plans to attend the University of Wisconsin-Madison at which he will pursue a degree in Industrial Engineering, Witzmann presented Mike with a certificate of achievement. Michael thanked the board for their recognition.

Pupil Services Director Darren Kern introduced Silver Ring Spartan Award Recipient Meg Farrington, the school district's Elementary School Speech/Language Pathologist. Kern commended Farrington on her work with students, stating she did a good job helping students navigate through issues. Outside of school Farrington also serves on several non-profit boards. Board member Cranston presented Farrington with a certificate of achievement award for 25 years of service with the Somerset School District. Farrington thanked the board and administration, saying she has enjoyed teaching and working in the district. Farrington also thanked the board for allowing teachers freedom and support of staff for continuing professional development.

The board recognized board member Mike Connor for 20 years of service on the Somerset Board of Education. Witzmann gave a synopsis of Connor's board career, stating Connor had stepped down from the board several years ago in order to let others serve, but decided to run again. Witzmann presented Connor with a certificate of achievement. Connor thanked the board members and gave a bit of background of how he came to Somerset and what led him to become involved in the community. Connor stated Somerset School Board has always put kids first, and it has been his pleasure to serve on the board.

The Somerset High School Dynamics group gave an Appreciation Performance before the board, which included songs performed for the Wisconsin Association of School Boards Association conference held in Milwaukee. Dynamics members include Brittney Anderson, David Blair, Dana Carlson, Katie Carlson, Cylie Colbeth, Joe Egon, Holly Germain, Gina Hanzlik, Joe Hinke, Riley Jackson, Jessie Lammers, Tayler Miller, Elizabeth Ottman, Amanda Prax, Haley Ritter, Carley Seibel, Johanna Smith, Danielle Stone, Natalie Strese, with Brie Crichton on piano and Mike Meyer on bass. Choir Director Rachel Erickson thanked everyone for their support of the music program and allowing the students to travel to Madison and Milwaukee, stating it was a great opportunity for them to perform, and they represented Somerset well.

Meeting was then recessed at 7:25 and reconvened at 7:50 p.m.

Colbeth moved, with second by Moulton, to approve the Consent Agenda:

- A. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Session of January 19, 2009
- B. Approval of Minutes of the Special Session of January 19, 2009

- C. Approve payment of January/February Board Bills
- D. Approve 2008-09 Spring Coaching Assignments
- E. Approve hiring of Cindy Leonard for the position of .50FTE District Bilingual Aide for the 2008-09 school year
- F. Approve addendum to CESA 11 2009-10 Shared Services Contract to include vision services on “as needed” basis

Motion carried unanimously.

Moulton turned the Facilities Committee report regarding the Analyses of Results of Community Space Survey over to Rosburg to provide the board with a review of the analyses. Rosburg stated items were split out from the last board conversation, and the document was being brought forward to the board for approval before sharing it with the community. Witzmann said he wanted to be sure that, as a board, they agreed with the analyses of the administrative team. Board members then agreed to go through and discuss each question. Board agreed the analyses of *Question #1* regarding referendum voting was reflective of the community, bearing in mind the number of returned surveys. Board also liked the grouping of common themes in *Question #2* which addressed why the community voted as they did. Colbeth questioned the wording of “teachable moment” in *Question #3* dealing with property taxes. Some board members wondered what the district was trying to accomplish with this question. Members agreed the district’s Business Office web pages which are currently under construction will be a helpful way to keep the community better informed in this area. Members reviewed *Questions #4, 5, & 6* dealing with student numbers in classrooms. Board members asked the elementary principal how many students are in each of the classrooms at the elementary school. Principal Wood replied it was dependent upon the class, stating kindergarten has about 25-26 students in each classroom, and grades 1-4 are in the 20-23 students range per classroom. Board members then reviewed classroom sizes of the middle and high schools. Board members were informed the analyses took into account other options such as early graduation, youth options, virtual school, etc. at the high school. Board members agreed alternative education options would help take some pressure off the number of students in a classroom. Witzmann commented that the high school is a challenge to understand regarding classroom numbers as some upper level classes, or AP courses, may have fewer students. Members felt many variables may affect the density of a classroom, and would like to include those variables that may affect the analyses, i.e., youth options, school-to-work, virtual education, and early graduation. Board members went on to *Question #7* dealing with what actions should be taken by the district to accommodate enrollment. Some board members were uncomfortable with the comment of “do nothing” as a choice in this question, feeling that there was not enough clarity in what it meant. Witzmann felt there were some common themes resulting from this question, and that “do nothing” gave people a chance to express their frustration. Board members reviewed *Question #8* regarding referendum amounts. Colbeth said her analysis of replies to this question was that, at any cost, no referendum will be supported, and felt the amounts were too close and may be misleading. Witzmann reminded board members the board needs to respond to the community with survey results soon, agreeing that editions of the analyses may need to be done, but would like to send it out to the community for feedback and to move forward based upon that information. Members reviewed *Question #9* regarding fine arts auditorium and a pool, with Witzmann commenting the district received a resounding statement from the community that a fine arts auditorium, or pool would not be supported. Rosburg said the analyses would be cleaned up with the board’s editions and sent out to the community. Members agreed they would like just the analyses piece sent out to the community without the proposed solutions, and ask for community input if they “concur with the analyses:” if not, what solutions they would suggest. Hansch suggested the elementary, middle and high schools acronyms be spelled out instead of ES, MS, and HS. Board agreed to hold off on discussing solutions to the community space survey until it receives feedback of possible solutions from community.

Colbeth reported on the Business Services Committee, turning its recent discussion over to Business Manager Bob Avery for comment. Avery discussed the 2009-2010 Budget Development which will be the focus of the next committee meeting. Avery said the district will know more about the budget’s impact once the Governor’s address is given tomorrow. He said the current budget scenario is based on the Governor’s recent statement that no budget decrease will be public school districts’ increase. Colbeth stated she wasn’t comfortable with the recent flyer sent out from the school district regarding the additional driveway and the statement regarding “no tax increase;” she felt

the flyer should have specifically added “no tax increase for the second driveway.” Rosburg said the flyer was sent to the board for review before it was mailed to the community, but he did not receive feedback from board members, and asked what would be a reasonable process for the district to get input from the board. Board members asked Rosburg if he reviewed the brochure with the Superintendent’s Input Group. Rosburg stated he had reviewed the flyer with them before sending it out to the community. He stated other community members have called him with questions about the driveway including sidewalks and lighting, but he has not had calls from the community about referendums or taxes. Rosburg clarified that dollars for the driveway are coming from budget set-aside dollars, so there will be no increases in taxes from this project. Witzmann said board members should take advantage of providing feedback for communications.

Avery then reported on the business year up-to-date report, stating it had been discussed at length at the Business Services Committee meeting. Avery said the report is a snapshot picture of district spending, and that the district is spending within its budget.

Avery also reported on the Capital Maintenance document, stating the report is a working document from the administrative team and includes input from maintenance supervisors on a variety of maintenance projects in the near and sometimes far future. The document includes routine, capital, and preventative maintenance projects as well as new equipment and is prioritized by need. Avery said the list will be compared to the budget based on available dollars.

Rosburg reported on current enrollment numbers, with enrollment staying the same this month as last month. Committee meetings slated for next month, March 2, include Business Services, Human Resources, and Governance. Rosburg pointed out the regularly scheduled March 16 board meeting would fall on the Monday of Spring Break Week. After some discussion, board members agreed to back the regularly scheduled March meeting to Monday, March 23, 2009.

Rosburg said board members were invited to a joint PAC Board Meeting at CESA 11 on Tuesday, March 24, 2009 at 6:00 p.m., and have until March 13th to inform Tammie Wishard if they would like to attend.

Cranston reported for CESA 11 board update, thanking Rosburg for providing the information on the Joint PAC board meeting. She also mentioned a future session on energy is in the works for elected officials and will keep the board posted on when the session will occur.

Witzmann reported on community involvement, stating board members may wish to participate at elementary conferences to talk with community members about the new entrance.

Witzmann provided board members with a WASB Report from the January WASB convention in Milwaukee. He stated Character Education was discussed at length, and noted Character Education has been very positive at Somerset Schools. Witzmann said community engagement was also discussed, and liked the idea of having dialogue with the community to discuss various items relating to the school district. Witzmann suggested the topic be brought to the Governance Committee for further review and recommendation to the full board.

Middle School Principal Rick Lange reported staff is looking forward to two in-service days this month. Friday teachers will be learning more about utilizing Lexile analysis. Lange explained every student has a Lexile score indicating their current reading level. At the Monday in-service a leader from CESA will provide a presentation on careers and what the future holds for students. Lange said career education is a large part of the district’s plan, stating the middle school is where the 16 career clusters are discussed with students. Teachers will also work on MAPs assessments and technology items including SMART board training. Staff will meet with a representative from the American Heart Association to plan a “Hoops for Hearts” fundraiser event which falls in line with the governor’s “Healthy Students, Healthy Schools” initiative. Lastly, Lange reported new bus-only restricted drive area signs were installed near the middle school, stating these restrictions will be enforced during the school day with initial warnings, then citations if needed.

Elementary School Principal Cherrie Wood reported on a busy week at elementary school, stating parent teacher conferences will be held this week. Staff development will complete work on report cards where they have been working on common assessments. Support staff aides will be trained on CPI for both certified and classified staff. Jr. Kindergarten registration will be held March 6, with Kindergarten registration held on March 13. A survey was sent out to parents asking how they felt about the “Welcome Back” day last fall with expanded teacher conferences. Wood said over 300 surveys were returned, with an overwhelmingly positive response. Inclement weather surveys will be provided at up-coming conferences as well. Information on the additional driveway will also be available for parents.

Business Manager Robert Avery gave his report on year-to-date cash flow, noting tax revenues are coming in a little behind from where they were expected. Avery is monitoring this closely and will be able to provide more information next month. He stated the Business Services Committee reviewed budget amendments, which are included in an action item later in the agenda. Avery noted this week is School Bus Driver Recognition week, and thanked bus drivers from Safe-Way Bus Company for all they do to safely transport students. Avery reported the Business Services web pages are being pulled together and will be ready to post to the district’s web site soon, and will inform board members when the site goes live, appreciating any feedback they would like to give. Lastly, Avery stated the 2009 summer audit will be held sometime between July 29 and August 12, 2009.

Director of Pupil Services Darren Kern reported on happenings within the Special Education Department, stating last week the district received data on recent self-assessment indicators. Other indicators the district will be reporting on are the special education students who are seniors in high school. One of the indicators the district reports on is how much special education students are pulled from their regular classrooms to participate in special areas. Kern stated Somerset Schools are well under the limits for pulling out special education students from their regular classrooms. Kern also reported on happenings in the gifted and talented area, stating 5th and 8th grade gifted-talented students recently participated in a math workshop. Destination Imagination students will be involved in a regional competition on March 27, 2009. The ELL Department received word recently that the school district and consortium has met all academic targets. ELL will be hosting its annual Family Night on February 26th at 6:30 p.m., and the board is invited to attend.

Ron Berg, Director of Curriculum & Instruction, reported in light of on-going reports about the United States not producing engineers as many engineers as other countries, the school district started reviewing its math program a year ago, and will continue to look at standards and materials to support all new math changes. The math committee is hoping the review and changes will help to produce the type of engineering students the country needs. Aligning with the Strategic Plan, a representative from CESA will be on hand during an upcoming in-service day to talk about career clusters and what may be in store in the future for students’ careers. Berg is also reviewing possible foreign languages for elementary instruction, stating that exploratory Spanish is currently taught at the middle school level for five weeks. He said the high school offers Spanish and French for their foreign language courses. The high school also offers American Sign Language. Berg added the decision to select a foreign language at the elementary level is important as it has a large ripple effect.

Johanna Smith reported on High School Student Council happenings saying it has been a busy month for student council as they have been working on activities including the Penny Wars fundraiser for the Leukemia/Lymphoma Society of Wisconsin, the Mr. and Mrs. Somerset Pageant which will help raise funds for the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, and many prom activities. Witzmann thanked Johanna for her report.

High School Principal Shawn Madden reported the high school continues to work on health and wellness initiatives. Upcoming in-service days include a full plate of activities including continued work on thematic units. Madden also recognized the current “Students of the Month,” and thanked high school staff for their continued work on Character Education. Madden then invited board members to the upcoming Empty Bowls event, which will highlight thematic units teachers have been working on with students. Madden thanked board members for coming in tonight to help make some of the bowls for the empty bowls project, and thanked high school seniors for coming in to help the board members. The High School Guidance Department is in the process of registration for next year classes. High school counselors will be hosting sophomore conferences with students and parents during February

and March; these conferences will help give families a chance to talk about their students' educational and career goals.

On behalf of the Business Services Committee, Colbeth moved, with second by Cranston, to support the recommendations of the 2008-2009 budget adjustments. Avery reported on the recent Business Services Committee's review of the 2008-2009 budget adjustments, noting that if the board approved the adjustments, state statute requires a two-thirds vote this evening. Motion carried unanimously.

On behalf of the Teaching and Learning Committee, Moulton moved, with second by Connor, to approve Reading Policy IKF Basic Reading as a Graduation Requirement to include the MAPs assessment tool. Cranston, reporting for the Teaching and Learning Committee, stated that the policy is not a new policy, but highlights the MAPs assessment tool as the tool now being used to assess reading. Motion carried unanimously.

On behalf of the Teaching and Learning Committee, Moulton moved, with second by Hansch, to approve the Project Lead the Way contract agreement. Cranston stated this agreement will enhance the current district Tech Ed course to be more engineering based. Motion carried unanimously.

On behalf of the Facilities Committee, Gunther moved, with second by Hansch to approve Option 1 Additional Drive Entryway. Board members asked Rosburg if he had received any calls from community members regarding the driveway. Rosburg stated most of the questions were about where the driveway was going, with most people supportive of it. Motion carried unanimously.

On behalf of the Facilities Committee, Witzmann moved, with second by Cranston to seek alternate bids for other campus roadway improvements. Moulton reported for the Facilities Committee, stating members were looking at safety, noting buses need wider corners to turn into the school parking lots. The committee would like to see bids for ideas of what can be done to improve the existing campus roadways, hoping that—due to the current status of the economy—bids may come in a bit lower. Motion carried unanimously.

Cranston moved, with second by Connor, to adjourn the meeting at 10:00 p.m. Motion carried.

Tim Witzmann, President

Catherine Cranston, Clerk